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Letter dated 31 March 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Djibouti to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

With reference to my letter dated 7 March 2016 to the President of the Security Council (S/2016/216), in which Djibouti expressed deep concern at the lack of progress in the implementation of the mediation agreement under the auspices of the State of Qatar, I wish to inform you about some encouraging developments as regards the release of only 4 of the 19 Djibouti prisoners of war still in the custody of Eritrea, incommunicado and in the most inhumane and degrading conditions, for the past eight years. By contrast, Djibouti fully accounted for the 19 Eritrean prisoners of war in its custody, treated them humanely and facilitated access to them by the Red Cross.

The Government of Djibouti would like to state that this is just the beginning of a process that we hope signals a radical change in the behaviour of the State of Eritrea, so far characterized by denial, procrastination and obfuscation.

The Government of the Republic of Djibouti has expressed its sincere gratitude to Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar, for the crucial role he played in the release of those four Djibouti prisoners and indeed for his tireless efforts in his endeavour to help mediate between Djibouti and Eritrea with the ultimate goal of reaching a final and binding agreement. However, 15 Djiboutian prisoners of war are still unaccounted for, and we renew our demand for their immediate release.

We seize this opportunity to also thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his message and the distinguished Member States and organizations which, while welcoming this development, have reiterated the demand of the Security Council that Eritrea release the remaining prisoners held in its custody and scrupulously and expeditiously implement in good faith the 6 June 2010 agreement concluded under the auspices of the Emir of Qatar.

Djibouti wishes to inform you and the distinguished Members of the United Nations that it is grateful to the Emir of Qatar and the Government of Qatar for their efforts to bring about a peaceful resolution to the dispute between Djibouti and Eritrea in accordance with international law. Djibouti applauds these efforts and

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pledges to do all in its power to help them succeed. Towards that end, Djibouti has submitted to the Emir of Qatar a comprehensive statement of pertinent facts and legal principles applicable to this matter. Djibouti urges Eritrea to honour its international obligations and its commitment to fully cooperate with the Emir of Qatar in his selfless efforts to help the parties reach a final and binding determination of the boundary between Djibouti and Eritrea and of the other matters that form part of the dispute, based on international law. With regard to its support for armed bands seeking to overthrow and destabilize the Government of Djibouti, in violation of its obligations under Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations and customary international law, as well as its obligations under several Security Council resolutions, Djibouti urges Eritrea to permanently cease and desist from such activities.

I would be most grateful if the present letter could be brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council and circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 34, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mohamed Siad **Doualeh**